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MR. KOVACS: Good afternoon. My name is

11 Bill Kovacs. I'm vice-president of Environmental Regulatory

12 Affairs for the U.S. Chamber Business, the largest business

2 13 federation in the world. [Energy is a very important issue to

14 business. And nuclear energy is very important because it

15 comprises 20 percent of the energy supplied of the country.

16 If it's to remain a major source and we believe it is and 17

there's no substitute for the 20 percent, then we have to 18

have a safe economical way in which to manage our waste.]

19 Today we have 100 nuclear facilities across

20 the country. Each of these are storing waste on their sites.

21 The electric industry at the same time is becoming more

22 competitive and the demand for energy is growing. At the

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1 same time, the nation is requiring more and more stringent  
2 environmental requirements of its utilities as well as  
3 everyone else.

3 [ 4 And one of the reasons why they are using  
5 nuclear energy is because nuclear energy is pollution free.

6 It doesn't produce the ozone. It doesn't produce the  
7 particulate matter. The reason we are dealing with nuclear 8  
energy today, because in the 1970s, and many of you forget 9  
it, we had two major massive shocks to the energy supply of  
10 the country. First was the 1973 oil embargo and the second  
11 was the winter of 1976, which was extremely cold. The oil 12  
embargo affected 20 percent of all of the nation's electric  
13 supplies, and that '76, '77 winter affected the gas supplies.  
14 And we had companies shutting down, and we were unable to  
15 deliver electricity.

16 Because of that, the nation rebalanced its  
17 entire energy supply and began to diversify, and one of the  
18 fuels that it used to diversify was nuclear energy. Not only  
19 is a strong tool in the sense, it produces 20 percent of the  
20 energy of the country, but it's also our primary tool in  
21 fighting both global warming as well as greenhouse gases. 22  
Nuclear energy is clean, ] and let me just give you some

1 examples.

2                   Between 1973 and 1977 the use of nuclear  
3 energy avoided the emission of 8.2 million tons of sulfur  
4 dioxide and more than 37.5 million tons of oxide of nitrogen.  
5 At the same time it helped the regions of the country satisfy  
6 their attainment regulations. Producing enough electricity  
7 to meet our demands while complying with the Clean Air Act is  
8 very important. The nuclear energy facilities reaped the  
9 dual benefits of this diverse energy supply and environmental  
10 production that we received. But we must also recognize that  
11 we have to have responsible waste management practices.  
12 Policies that ensure a centralized waste management disposal  
13 and storage facility are absolutely crucial to this.

1... 14                   The practice of disposing of nuclear fuel in  
15 a deep underground facility built in the stable rock  
16 formation remains as valid as ever. Because the only       17  
alternative that we have is to leave the waste at the  
18 facilities around the country, and if it stays there, it   19  
stays there forever in an unstable position. So to talk   20  
about eliminating this would be really foolish.

21                   Now, the Yucca Mountain, and this is we are  
22 going to get the Environmental Impact Statement, is the most

1 cont. 1 studied piece of real estate in the planet. Nothing in the  
2 history of man has been more studied than Yucca Mountain.  
3 Scientific evidence comes out and it's fairly conclusive  
4 worldwide. One is there's a cost savings to the nation,  
5 somewhere between 25 million and 4.8 trillion dollars as a 6  
result of moving the fuel from around the 72 facilities to 7  
8 one facility. Second, there would be little harm posed to  
9 radiation, less than one percent an average American receives  
10 from natural resources would be from Yucca Mountain. To  
11 think it is one percent we have from the background and we  
12 are not willing to take this risk is absolutely ridiculous.  
13 Three, they talk about transportation.  
14 Well, just so everyone knows, we have had over the last 20  
15 years 3,000 shipments of nuclear waste by rail or by truck,  
16 and there's never been an incident. So in terms of safety, I  
17 would suggest that we've got a proven track record on that.  
18 The natural barriers of Yucca Mountain and its world class  
19 engineering will keep it away from the water. I've been  
20 there, and I've heard the comments on water. When they are  
21 talking about water, they are talking about a drip in dozens  
22 and dozens and dozens in hundreds and thousands of years.  
23 This is not a flow of water. This is moisture.

1                   So what we have to do is we begin sitting  
2   down -- we have to begin thinking about what nuclear waste  
3   and what nuclear energy does for our life. It gives us the  
4   electricity that produces it in an emission free environment.  
5   It gives us 20 percent of the energy. If we didn't have  
6   that, we would have to begin shutting down our factories.  
7   And our factories, I suggest, are the wealth that we have and  
8   the means that we have to generate the wealth that produces  
9   the cleanest environment in the world. Thank you very much.

10                   MR. LAWSON: Thank you. Our next speaker is  
11   James Dushaw, to be followed by Chuck Harple and Vincent  
12   Panvini.